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WINTER 2013-14



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Winter 2014/15

Find. Fix. Feather.

Those three words sum up the notions behind Seven Days' quarterly supplement about home, design and real estate. If you're in the market to buy or sell, make a minor spruce up your dcor we aim to inspire.

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ON THE COVER

Wendy Johnson of Design For Living designed this Weston kitchen, built by Davis Friesen Co. architects. Photo by Alcey Marshall.



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Contemporary



Style from Marvin Windows and Doors

Photo: Marvin Windows and Doors

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WINTER NIGHT IN MAC-N-CHEESE

8 Tb (4oz) Vermont Creamery unsalted butter

8 oz alpine goat

1 lg. Granville Brook Farm Organic Whole Milk

1 lb. Gruyere cheese (from the Recipe)

8 oz. Colby Jack Sharp Cheddar, grated

3 oz. Danish Blue Cheese, crumbled

1 cup Grano Reggiano

Step 1

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Add parts to boiling salted water and cook for 11 minutes. Meanwhile, heat milk over medium heat, but keep from boiling.

Step 2

Melt 6 Tb butter in a large pot, add flour and whisk over low heat for about 2 minutes. Add heated milk and continue whisking until thick and smooth. Remove from heat.

Step 3

Add Cheddar, Gruyere, Sharp Cheese and salt & pepper to taste. Stir in cooked pasta, mix well, and pour into a large baking dish. Top with breadcrumbs and dishes of remaining butter. Bake for 35-40 minutes until bubbly and browned.

Enjoy!

"Get creamy by adding spent cooked Vermont butter and a dash of cayenne to the cheese mixture before baking."

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What's Cooking?

*In the kitchen with
designer Wendy Johnson*

BY XIAN CHIANG-WAREN

TOP:
A kitchen in a Cleon-Hawke
built-in the early 1920s.

BOTTOM:
A South Los Angeles kitchen
featuring cherry cabinets.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIPPE DUCROS FOR THE KITCHEN TOP; COURTESY OF THE HOME BOTTOM

"Today's kitchens are not just kitchens," says award-winning interior designer Wendy Johnson.

To be sure, that room is still where meals are prepared.

But increasingly, it's also the room where family members cross paths and visitors hang out. From a designer's standpoint, it's not uncommon to imagine the kitchen with a built-in reading nook, dining area and even recreation space. "The kitchen is just the center of everything that goes on," Johnson says.

Johnson owns and operates Designs for Living, a kitchen, bath and "transcopic" design firm based in Manchester, Vt. She's helped clients artfully arrange their living spaces for more than 26 years. And she's racked up a slew of industry honors, most recently the National Kitchen & Bath Association's 2013 Design Competition award for "Best Kitchen."

Johnson's aesthetic is eclectic and adaptable based on customer preference, though her portfolio reflects an affinity for rooms that are bathed in natural light, accented with碰撞的 wishes of color and fitted with efficient counter-top and fixtures in distinctive textures and finishes. She says she's inspired by classical design, nature and history.

That's a product of her professional and academic background, as well as personal preferences. Johnson is a former biologist, who took a break from science to raise her three children. When she reentered the workforce, she pursued her love of interior design by snagging a coveted job at a high-end kitchen design showroom in Denver, Colo., while putting herself through design school. "I've



Wendy Johnson
of Designs for Living

maintained my love of nature and the environment," Johnson says. "But I just love interior design, and I'm passionate about kitchen design in particular."

When she works in a kitchen, Johnson tries to "incorporate wide-open spaces and also small, cozy spaces." The result should accommodate multiple functions: meal prep, recreation and eating. "I try to think not just in terms of how it's going to work for somebody in the next few years but also over the long term," she says. Family dynamics and generational needs change over time, so a designer can be mindful of accommodating growing kids, aging in-laws and other such shifts.

Johnson's golden rules for kitchen design? Bring in as much natural light as possible (a good rule of thumb for any room), and make sure there's plenty of counter space.

"A big trend we're seeing today, which I think is nice, is that people are cooking at home more often than they used to," she says. "That went away for a couple of decades. But now people want to be home

MAHOGANY COOKWARE 36-195

House hunting is just like any other shopping expedition.

If you identify exactly what you want and do some research, you'll zoom in on the home you want at the best price.

These eight tips will guide you through a smart homebuying process.

1. Know thyself.

Understand the type of home that suits your personality.

2. Research before you look.

List the features you most want in a home and identify which are necessities and which are extras. Log onto Realtor.com to get a feel for the homes available in your price range in your favorite neighborhoods.

3. Get your finances in order.

Create a budget so you know how much you're comfortable spending each month on housing. Don't wait until you've found a home and made an offer to investigate financing.

4. Set a moving timeline.

Do you have timelines on your credit that will take months to clear up? If you already own, have you sold your current home? If not, you'll need to factor in the time needed to sell.

5. Think longterm.

Your future plans may dictate the type of home you'll buy. Are you looking for a starter house with plans to move up in a few years, or do you hope to stay in the home for five to 10 years?

6. Work with a REALTOR®.

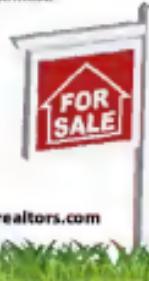
Ask people you trust for referrals to a real estate professional they trust. Check whether agents are "REALTORS®," which means they're members of the National Association of Realtors®. NAR has been a champion of homeownership rights for more than a century.

7. Be realistic.

It's OK to be picky about the home and neighborhood you want, but don't be close minded, unrealistic, or blinded by minor imperfections.

8. Limit the opinions you solicit.

It's hard to seek reassurance when making a big financial decision. If you need a second opinion, select one or two people.



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What's Cooking?

more, spending time with family and cooking together."

To bring "sunlight and beauty and spaciousness and comfort" into her kitchen, Johnson likes to tackle them from multiple angles. She typically draws up several different concepts with her clients at the very beginning. "It's much easier to work out various ideas on paper rather than, years later, wonder why we didn't consider something," she says with a laugh. Sometimes an unusual approach — such as creating a new window or turning a spare into an adjoining room to accommodate the refrigerator, for example — makes all the difference.

Those who'd like a kitchen upgrade but can't afford it in interior designer land need not be discouraged. Building your own kitchen, Johnson says, "does not have to be a home-made expense."

Our inexpensive and easy kitchen:



TOP A Remodeler's Dream addition on kitchen and expanded breakfast nook; **BOTTOM** A South Londonderry kitchen customization in works.

Fixtures With Flair

Looking for lights, faucets and all the other kitchen fixings? These Vermont-based businesses dish out unusual — and beautiful — decor.



Fatocco

fatocco.com

Given your kitchen sink a punk-rock makeover with wild bronze shelf brackets designed by Frank Fatocco of Clean to Home in South Burlington. The brackets come in a range of finishes and are also available in stainless. (They are not your typical hardware.) Fatocco is currently at work on a Buddha head prototype.



Consort Metal & Light

consortmetal.com/light

The artists at the Pine Street shop churn out eye-popping array of original lighting options. No mention of kiosks and effete furniture items in vintage contexts. Far, far better, owner Steve Conrant recommends hanging pendant lights over counters to ensure a well-lit work space. Many fixtures exude art. Consort uses unique woods of art created from recycled repurposed materials, including miners' washboards and former factory tools.



Anomal

anomal.us

This Montpelier design and fabrication company is racking up a reputation for its artisanal concrete counters. Designers Chris Kiger and Dennis Taylor have made these for restaurants including Positive Pie and Joanie's, as well as for private residence. Concrete has a durable surface that can be cast into virtually any shape. "We like it for its organic quality," says Kiger. "There are takeaways to it that make it what you can take it from one side to another and use it with very few restrictions in terms of form, shape and appearance. It's really just up to your imagination how you cast the form."

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Artistic Touch

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BY AMY LILLY



"Beloved" by Leslie Daniels, available at Blues Family Practice

When Lillian and Bill Mause, co-owners of the building that houses Stowe Family Practice, decided they wanted to buy an outdoor sculpture for the property, they went a mile down Mountain Road to West Branch Gallery & Sculpture Park. Owned by Tari Swenson and her sculptor husband Chris Curtis, West Branch is one of the few places in Vermont that offers a wide selection of contemporary outdoor sculpture for sale.

Though the Mauses are longtime art collectors, Swenson recalls that they selected a piece she immediately knew was wrong for the site of a medical clinic. The sculpture was a segmented metal creation that rose from the ground in an S-curve, evoking a drooping human figure. After Swenson directed them to other sculptures, the Mauses chose a steel piece by Curtis called "Balance."

This 6-foot-tall, roughly hewed sculpture has a rectangular cutout in the middle. It's the kind of Zen piece that, like the West Branch owners, may reassess patients coming in for checkups, even if they don't consciously notice it.

Art makes its way into homes and businesses through several channels. Owners may search for art themselves, hire an interior designer or go straight to a gallery for help. A gallery's eye is key, says Swenson. These art consultants are people who "live" the work they represent and can judge exactly what will suit a space best. As an added bonus, their services don't obligate clients to buy, and cost nothing beyond the artwork's price tag.

Not satisfied with two-area galleries that offer art consultation services, West Branch and Burlington City Arts, however, any gallery owner who represents a significant array of artists will happily visit a space and make suggestions. "It's the unspoken

thing we do," says Jason Pritchett, of Pritchett Studio/Gallery in Shelburne.

Swenson has a third business and private residences from Grand Lake to San Francisco with art. She and Curtis purchased a trailer so they can haul multiple works to clients. Once there, Curtis typically builds a platform in place while Swenson and the client confer.

For those interested in sculpture, Curtis creates full-scale mock-ups of any piece he West Branch's extensive outdoor collection and brings it to the proposed site. This allows the client to see the piece in its environment and easily move it around while deciding on placement. Curtis' plywood model of "Balance," for example, helped the Mauses decide to place the sculpture at the clinic's entrance, rather than at the roadside location they originally envisioned. The gallery takes care of final installation.

Increasingly though, Swenson's clients choose to assess their options digitally by sending her an iPhone photo of their space. "That's the beginning of the fun," she says. Using a measurement provided by the client — the dimensions of the room, or even the length of a chair leg — she can estimate the size of the artwork,

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DIGITAL DESIGN

A panel of five art consultation services, Nessa Sorenson's 'Art Consult' offers art-hungry clients three pre-design options for a permanent escape from home.

LEFT TO RIGHT:

- "Through Life Like the Wind" by Swanson (top chevronwork)
- "Way Home" by Jerry Penn Johnson
- "Presto" by Chez Griffin



Artistic Touch

and Photoshop in any number of options. She even adds shadows.

BCA's corporate art program has its own digital service, an enormous library of images, most of them works by Vermont artists. This comprehensive database is also used for its art-leasing program. Kate Achison, the leasing specialist, and Kim Mason, director of art sales and gallery administration, look through the database with clients.

BCA's involvement with one Burlington business, Hotel Vermont, yielded particularly stunning results. Mason's predecessor, Sara Katz (now BCA's assistant director), was the art consultant when the hotel was under construction two years ago. Hotel owner Jay Canning's interior designer, Kira DeJarn and her crew at Burlington's TrueGalleria, brought her onto the job.

The interior designers wanted abstract art, and presented BCA with a carefully considered selection of materials. Of the three swirling, dark magenta Gail Salazar paintings Katz chose for the hotel's



lobby, she comments, "We thought the colors made sense for this place. And Salazar does a lot with water. Given the proximity to Lake Champlain, we thought it was appropriate."

The BCA staff also suggested the Nessa Krappel portfolio on paper (laminated in one upstairs hallway) and digital prints of it for each of the queen bed rooms. They compensated Torrey and Tess Veljou of Winooski's New Dads, to silhouette a black-and-white traditional branch-and-lace design on the wall beside each king bed.

Owner Canning, an art lover himself, chose to place a Dennis Johnson found-materials wood sculpture over the main desk. The work is striking in its nothingness.

Not every client can determine the right piece and placement, of course. Gallery folks like those at BCA and West Branch work with all types, including corporate businesses that have a branded look and homeowners who have no familiarity with art.

The results are powerful. Spaces with art create a strong "first impression," says Sorenson. "When you walk in, you may not even know why you like that place!"

**WHEN YOU WALK IN, YOU
MAY NOT EVEN KNOW WHY
YOU LIKE THIS PLACE.**

TARI SWENSON



Burlington City Arts
Kym Mason
www.burlingtoncityarts.org

West Branch Gallery
Tari Swenson
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Karl Schumacher Photography
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Belrose's Place

Home inspector Jeff Belrose digs deep so buyers don't have to

BY KEN PICARD

Home inspector Jeff Belrose straddles the line between being thorough and being nitpicky. During an inspection, he looks closely at everything, but doesn't blow every flaw and blemish out of proportion.

"You're like a referee, calling it as you see it," he says. "If there are two parties involved, one person is going to like the call, and the other person may not."

Belrose launched Belrose Home Inspections in 2009 after years of restoring houses and businesses damaged by mold, water or fire, currently, he inspects 600 to 800 houses annually. Previously, Belrose, 47, worked in education and mental health services in St. Albans.

Having a mental health background still informs his work. It is not unusual, he says, for a buyer or homeowner to respond to a discovery of mold, termites or foundation problems the same way as someone in a mental health crisis. In those circumstances, Belrose says he tries to help people put the discoveries into perspective. As he puts it, "Unless it's really out of control, I look at everything as fixable."

Belrose took time out between jobs to speak with Nest.

NEST: What are the most common problems you encounter?

JEFF BELROSE: Everything from not having the right seismic detectors or plans to locate plumbing lines. Problems with roofs are tough because, unless it's raining, you're not necessarily going to see it if it's leaking. I had the good fortune this summer of inspecting a home during a heavy rainstorm, and I could literally see water dripping through the roof.

What are the most severe problems you've identified?

Foundations are some of the easiest. One day we looked at a bank-owned property full of mold, and the buyer was planning to flip the house. We opened up some of the walls which you generally don't get to do on a normal inspection. It turned out, all the caulkets had to be replaced — a \$30,000 repair. On septic systems, I've advised clients to [inspect where] underground pipes [are] in older field and, once enough, the field had failed. That's a \$30,000 to \$35,000 fix. I had three of these last year.

What complaints do you hear from clients?

A lot of clients here this season say that, because they get a home inspection, their house should be presented new and free of faults. Then, a month later, their hot water tank fails. There's no way I would know that. If I could know that in advance, well, I'd be rich, but they always start their usual with, "I want to know why that was raised." I never wake up in the morning and think, "I think I'll mess Mrs. Smith's faucet on her water tank today."

Any unusual situations you've encountered?

I've found live wild animals in houses: rabbits living in basements and mice coons living in attics. I've literally seen snakes running through basements, and they're always been that way. I'm also fascinated by the way people build things, good and bad.

What's an example of the good? One guy spray painted the house's entire interior in a cave-like fashion. He also built the main part of his house using tree trunks as the support. It was amazing.

And the bad?

I've inspected houses that you wonder how anyone loves or lives in them. Because of the things you can't do to judge a fellow human being for the choices they make — much like in my mental health days. People see people.

In your job ever hazardous?

It can be. Some people do some creative things with wiring, and you're unlucky sometimes. A couple of weeks ago, I flipped a breaker and it flashed, inside a feed long right in front of my face, and short the whole house down. Structurally, I've seen decks built improperly that won't hold weight very well sometimes. You'd imagine glass a little too far.

Ever get bitten by dogs?

A couple of times a year. I love dogs and I respect their place, but I don't believe anybody when they say, "Oh, Fluffy's OK. He won't bite." He will. One time I had this little dog bite me three times. He just kept coming with nowhere else and biting me on the ankles.

What's the best part of your job?

The people. I have great customers: the first-time home buyers who are super-excited about buying their first house; the second-time buyers, the people buying their last house who are looking to downsize. I really enjoy the personal contact.

Any advice for homebuyers?

People should really consider a pre-inspection if they're selling a home. It takes a lot of uncertainties out of the negotiation because there aren't any surprises. You either know about the issues upfront or you're already addressed them, so you don't feel blindsided. Just make sure you're using someone who has the proper credentials, and not "Grade B"! We love Uncle Bill, and he's welcome to come along, but you've got to treat him like any other professional service.

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Making It Work

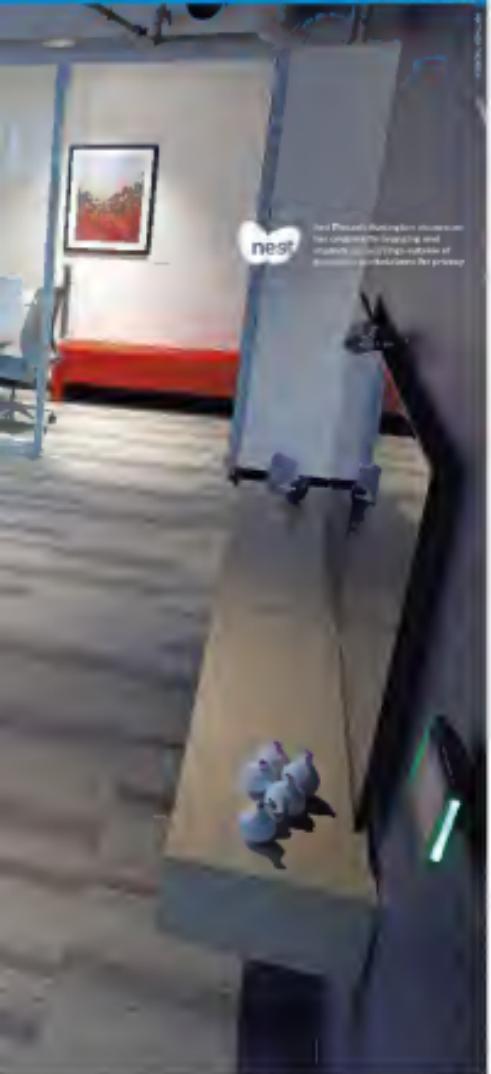


*Red Thread designs office spaces
for a new era*

BY ETHAN DE SEPE

The more time you spend in the Washington office of design company Red Thread, the likelier you are to notice the subtle ambient hiss from ceiling-mounted speakers. Due to its wavelength, this sound is classified as pink noise, and its purpose is to render intra-office sounds less distinguishable. You can tell a conversation is taking place on the other side of the room, but you can't make out the words.

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Making It Work

Whether pink, white or any other some color, the method works. When Neat visits Red Thread at its Battery Street quarters, corporate account manager Deanne Milne, who a colleague has removed the sound for a moment. What was previously an otherwise busttightly hushed intelligent conversation. For a bustling workplace, the advantages of such a system are obvious.

That Red Thread employs pink noise in its own files indicates that the company's designers practice what they preach. Every shared work space boasts a small touchscreen that's used to make room reservations. Comfortably contemporary couches for lounging are within arm's reach of a full-function digital workstation. A small, glassed-in room not only offers quiet to anyone who requires intense focus, but enables others that whoever's inside it wishes not to be disturbed.

Milne — no relation to the recent Vermont gubernatorial candidate — says that a well-designed work space is only as good as the understanding of the "priorities" for the use of that space. "You can solve a whole lot of real estate issues by looking at how much time people spend in certain places and how much real estate you allocate to it," he suggests.

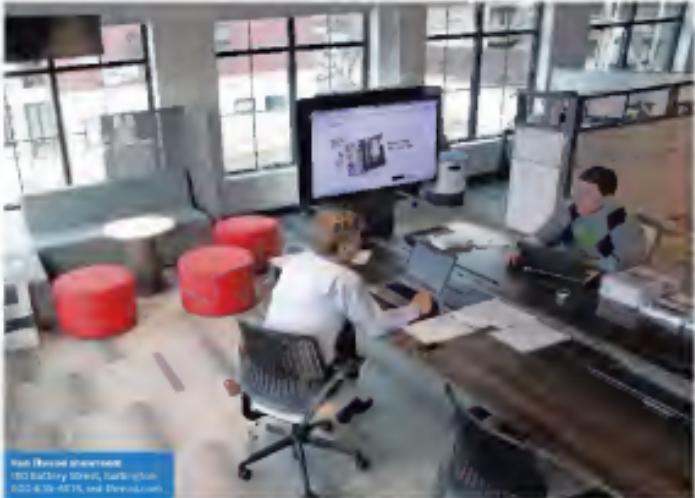
Red Thread, a full-service design agency in a semi-industrial heritage complex of Steelcase, the world's largest manufacturer of office furniture. The design of nearly every workflow process is in its domain from office layout to software environments to furniture (many brands, not just Steelcase). The idea is to offer clients a one-stop, customizable, fully integrated design experience.

"What we do," says Milne, "is essentially build a 3-D model of an empty space. We've got thousands of different line items — for computer brackets and cables and so on — and the designer is critical in see all of those pieces come into system."

Steelcase is an international brand, but Red Thread's 30 offices and four warehouse, including one in Williston, are all located in New England. The Burlington office has worked with a diverse array of local clients, including South Burlington's engineering supply company Innovariant, the regional nonprofit mental health agency Howard Center, and municipal organizations such as the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

Milne exemplifies the company's integrative approach when he visits the Seven Days/War office to give an informal consultation on the theoretical design of an arched conference room. While he's interested in each seat-and-table issue as the placement of the video projector, most of the questions he asks concern the nature of the meetings that take place there and whether employees use their laptops during those meetings.

For many clients, Milne says, Red Thread plays a "Sherpa role," guiding the client through the wilderness of office-furniture options and acting as liaison between client and architect. The shrewd benefit of hiring a single design company to do everything from workstation to ether-net cables, he says, is that Red Thread is able to anticipate questions that would not arise if a job were to be tackled by multiple, disconnected firms.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Open-plan office at Innovationair; Conference room here to discuss real estate investments;
A red circular stool creates a welcoming environment for a nephew.

"If you have a bank of windows here and a video camera here," says Milne, "giving around a Red Thread meeting room, 'everybody here is going to look dark during a videoconference.' We provide that kind of insight."

Part of the company's mission is, as he puts it, "to deconstruct all of the mythology that [we] hold about the workplace." He rattles off examples. Why do we assume that employees need to be working when they're not physically in the office? Why do executives "need" or "deserve" large offices, when most of their time is spent off-site or in meeting rooms? In an era when many employees carry powerful computers in their pockets, how issues of space and privacy in the workplace change in a fundamental way?

"People assume that having a high-performance work environment is really expensive," says Milne, "but many companies don't realize that a rearrangement of existing space — rather than the construction of additional space — often ends up, even after redesign costs, saving the company money in the long run."

As Milne puts it, "The workplace needs to support not just what you do — that's easy to design around — but why you exist."



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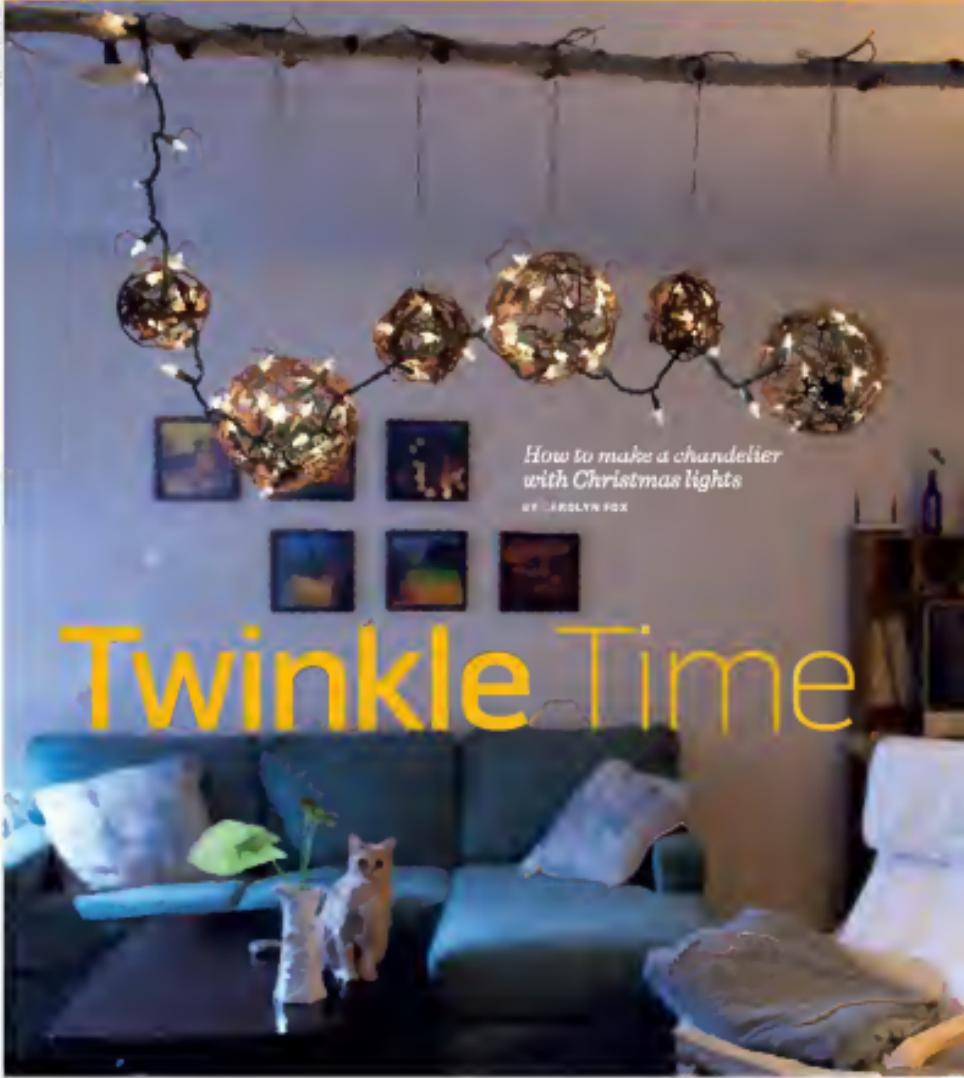
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*How to make a chandelier
with Christmas lights*

BY CAROLYN FOX

Twinkle Time



nest

There's nothing more festive during the holiday season than hooking in the glow of twinkle lights — whether they're decking your tree or the eaves of your house. So why pack those sparkling strings away after just a couple of weeks? For all the sweat — and swearing, if my experience is typical — you put into untangling them, the lights deserve a longer display. Year-round, even.

As someone who travels for the holidays and doesn't get a Christmas tree, I wanted to find a nonconventional way to bring the cheery lights into my apartment beyond the holiday season. While simply stringing them up along the ceiling is always an option, I was looking to create a more elegant light source. A friend's outdoor summer wedding sprung to mind. The green-hued tied-together fallen branches and wrapped them in lights, creating a gorgeously rustic cascade that was rotated over the dance floor. It was a showstopper.

I was sure that if I re-created that chandelier without any kind of instruction, I'd eventually be held responsible when a branch slipped out of my shoddy knots and caused someone in the herd — causing concussion, brain damage and, probably death. So I took to Pinterest to find standard DIY chandeliers.

There were some wacky ones at least three sites suggested I affix little lights to a Hula Hoop and hang it above my dining room table. I'll give them points for creativity — but it still looked like a Hula Hoop. No amount of lights could disguise that.

DIY

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Twinkle Time

I settled on something a little less...cutesy—A craft blog called All Things Harry + Honey gave simple instructions for crafting an outdoor chandelier which uses white lights were threaded through slices of healthy grapevines and hung from a branch branch. It looked woodsy and magical. I adapted the idea for indoor use with pretty good success, if I do say so myself. (See my step-by-step directions below.) Supplies cost about \$80—not bad for a chandelier!

say so myself. (See my step-by-step directions below.) Supplies cost about \$80—not bad for a chandelier!

The best part, at least for other first-challenger folks like myself? This project doesn't require a chainsaw, a power drill, a belt sander or even a wrench. If you can tie a double knot, you can make this! A Christmas miracle, indeed. 

**IF YOU CAN TIE
A DOUBLE KNOT,
YOU CAN MAKE THIS.
A CHRISTMAS
MIRACLE, INDEED.**

MATERIALS

- 24-volt string of white lights (with brown wire, if possible)
- 12-gauge twisted light cord
- 1 large grapevine branch
- 6 small grapevine bunches
- garden twine
- round birch branch (roughly 5 feet long)
- two-eye bolts
- extension cord

DIRECTIONS

Begin by arranging the grapevine bunches on the birch branch like bunches of bananas hanging from a tree. Carefully thread the lights through each sphere. Use short lengths of garden twine to double-knot the wires to the grapevines every 6 inches (this helps keep the lights in place). Tie a loop at the top of the branch. This is where the birch branch will sit on the extension cord of the power outlet. Make sure to keep the plug accessible.

Balance the birch branch horizontally across the two eye bolts. Your vines are tight enough to be the spheres on the branch as desired. Let loose extension cord from others. Secure the eye bolts into the ceiling where desired. Use twine to hang the branch from the eye bolts. Plug in the extension cord and run it down to the nearest power outlet. Unplugged is as possible. Let it glow!



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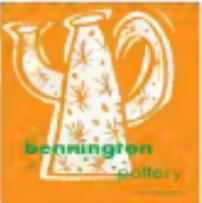
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